



## TENNESSEE

### Tennessee Success Story

Obesity is a growing problem among children throughout the United States. In Tennessee, more than one-third of children aged 10–17 years are overweight or obese—the fourth highest rate in the nation. In addition, 23% of all deaths in Tennessee in 2005 were caused by cancer.\*

In response, the Tennessee Comprehensive Cancer Control Program collaborated with Middle Tennessee State University to develop the A-B-C-1-2-3 Healthy Kids in Tennessee: Let's Eat Well, Play, and Be Aware Every Day program. Designed for child care providers, parents, and children aged 3–5 years, the program helps both children and adults understand the connection between lifestyle choices and chronic disease.

To participate in the A-B-C-1-2-3 program, child care facilities must offer educational opportunities for parents, children, and other family members for each area in the curriculum over the course of 12 weeks. These may include newsletters and handouts, workshops or presentations, and interactive classroom activities for the children. Facilities also receive information about selected topics, suggested activities, incentive gifts to share with parents and children, and volunteer presentations. Each class should do at least 30 minutes of active play or fitness at least three times per week and a nutrition activity for 10–15 minutes twice per week.

To help evaluate the program, child care providers fill out short surveys to assess their knowledge of physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco exposures; children wear pedometers to measure physical activity; parents answer questionnaires about their child's diet; and children's height and weight are measured before and after the program.

### CONTACT

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\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tennessee: Burden of Chronic Diseases. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/states/pdf/tennessee.pdf>.



The A-B-C-1-2-3 program is widening its reach through collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Health's Gold Sneakers initiative, which works to enhance policies related to physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco avoidance in licensed child care facilities. Together, they provide guidance for child care facilities to implement policy change and resources to facilitate healthy activities.

Through a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network, the voluntary Star-Quality program recognizes child care facilities that meet certain criteria with as many as three stars. Facilities that earn all three stars receive additional funding from the DHS.

Child care facilities may earn stars through the A-B-C-1-2-3 program. The director and staff members of participating child care centers can receive initial and ongoing training. A new Web site for the A-B-C-1-2-3 program will offer DHS-approved training credits to staff members at more than 700 child care facilities in the state.

It's never too early to start teaching children about healthy lifestyles. These efforts reach Tennessee's youngest residents and their caregivers to promote healthy living for the rest of their lives.



*Research has shown  
that being overweight  
or obese raises a person's  
risk of getting endometrial  
(uterine), breast, and  
colorectal cancers.*